A

SERIES

OF

LETTERS

ON

EDUCATION.

ASCRIBED TO

JOHN WITHERSPOON, D. D.

President of Princeton College,
New Jersey.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

TO

THE READER.

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THE intrinsic Merit of this little publication, it is presumed, will be a sufficient Apology for its being reprinted in England, from an edition printed at New-York, by J. Buel, for C. Davis, in 1797. *I have no authority for its being Dr. Witherspoon's, except the American title-page and the stile; but am fully of opinion, that it would not disgrace the pen of any one.*

Dr. W. was born at Yester, a few miles from Edinburgh, in 1722; *went to the University of Edinburgh at fourteen years of age; and, after several flattering invitations to Dublin, Rotterdam, &c. removed to Princeton, in* 1768, *where he filled his station with honor, till his death, Nov.* 15, 1794,

in the seventy-third year of his age, being blest with the use of his reasoning powers to the last. Two volumes of Sermons, and three of Essays, have sufficiently established his reputation.

The Poem at the end is likewise copied from the New-York edition.

BRISTOL,
Nov. 9, 1798. ISAAC JAMES.

LETTERS
ON
Education.

LETTER I.

AFTER ſo long a delay, I now ſet myſelf to fulfil my promiſe of writing to you a few thoughts on the education of children.—Though I cannot wholly purge myſelf of the crimes of lazineſs and procraſtination, yet I do aſſure you, what contributed not a little to its being hitherto not done, was, that I conſidered it not as an ordinary letter, but what deſerved to be carefully meditated on, and thoroughly digeſt-

ed. The concern you ſhew on this ſubject, is highly commendable: for there is no part of your duty, as a chriſtian, or a citizen, which will be of greater ſervice to the public, or a ſource of greater comfort to yourſelf.

The conſequence of my thinking ſo long upon it, before committing my thoughts to paper, will probably be the taking the thing in a greater compaſs than either of us at firſt intended, and writing a ſeries of letters, inſtead of one. With this view, I begin with a preliminary to the ſucceſsful education of children, viz. that huſband and wife ought to be entirely one upon this ſubject, not only agreed as to the end, but as to the means to be uſed, and the plan to be followed, in order to attain it. It ought to encourage you to proceed in your deſign, that I am perſuaded,

you will not only meet with no oppoſition to a rational and ſerious education of your children, but great aſſiſtance from Mrs. S—— * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

The eraſed lines contained a compliment, written with great ſincerity: but recollecting that there are no rules yet ſettled for diſtinguiſhing true compliment from flattery, I have blotted them out; on which, perhaps, you will ſay to yourſelf, "He is fulfilling the character which "his enemies give him, who ſay, it "is the nature of the man to deal "much more in ſatire than in panegyric." However, I content myſelf with repeating, that certainly huſband and wife ought to conſpire and co-operate in every thing relating to the education of their children; and if their opinions happen, in any particular, to be different,

they ought to examine and ſettle the matter privately by themſelves, that not the leaſt oppoſition may appear either to children or ſervants. When this is the caſe, every thing is enforced by a double authority, and recommended by a double example: but when it is otherwiſe, the pains taken are commonly more than loſt, not being able to do any good, and certainly producing very much evil.

Be pleaſed to remember, that this is by no means intended againſt thoſe unhappy couples, who, being eſſentially different in principles and character, live in a ſtate of continual war. It is of little advantage to ſpeak either to, or of, ſuch perſons. But even differences incomparably ſmaller, are of very bad conſequence: when one, for example, thinks a child may be carried out, and the other thinks it is wrong; when one

thinks a way of ſpeaking is dangerous, and the other is poſitive there is nothing in it. The things themſelves may indeed be of little moment; but the want of concurrence in the parents, or the want of mutual eſteem and deference, eaſily obſerved even by very young children, is of the greateſt importance.

As you and I have chiefly in view the religious education of children, I take it to be an excellent preliminary, that parental affection ſhould be purified by the principles, and controuled or directed by the precepts, of religion. A parent ſhould rejoice in his children as they are the gift of a gracious God; ſhould put his truſt in the care of an indulgent Providence for the preſervation of his offspring, as well as himſelf; ſhould be ſupremely deſirous that they may be, in due time, the

heirs of eternal life; and, as he knows the abſolute dependence of every creature upon the will of God, ſhould be ready to reſign them at what time his Creator ſhall ſee proper to demand them. This happy qualification of parental tenderneſs will have a powerful influence in preventing miſtakes in the conduct of education. It will be the moſt powerful of all incitements to duty, and at the ſame time a reſtraint upon that natural fondneſs and indulgence, which, by a ſort of faſcination or fatality, makes parents often do or permit what their judgment condemns, and then excuſe themſelves by ſaying, that no doubt it is wrong, but truly they cannot help it.

Another preliminary to the proper education of children, is a firm perſuaſion of the benefit of it, and the probable, at leaſt, if not certain,

ſucceſs of it, when faithfully and prudently conducted. This puts an edge upon the ſpirit, and enables the chriſtian not only to make ſome attempts, but to perſevere with patience and diligence. I know not a common ſaying either more falſe or pernicious, than "that the children of good men are as bad as others." This ſaying carries in it a ſuppoſition, that whereas the force of education is confeſſed with reſpect to every other human character and accompliſhment, it is of no conſequence at all as to religion. This, I think, is contrary to daily experience. Where do we expect to find young perſons piouſly diſpoſed but in pious families? The exceptions, or rather appearances to the contrary, are eaſily accounted for, in more ways than one. Many perſons appear to be religious, while they are not ſo in re-

ality, but are chiefly governed by the applauſe of men. Hence their viſible conduct may be ſpecious, or their public performances applauded, and yet their families be neglected.

It muſt alſo be acknowledged that ſome truly well diſpoſed perſons are extremely defective or imprudent in this part of their duty, and therefore it is no wonder that it ſhould not ſucceed. This was plainly the caſe with Eli, whoſe ſons, we are told, made themſelves vile, and he reſtrained them not. However, I muſt obſerve, if we allow ſuch to be truly good men, we muſt at the ſame time confeſs that this was a great drawback upon their character; and that they differed very much from the father of the faithful, who had this honorable teſtimony given him by God, "I know him, that he will com-

" mand his children and his houſhold " after him, that they ſerve me." To this we may add, that the child of a good man, who is ſeen to follow diſſolute courſes, draws the attention of mankind more upon him, and is much more talked of, than any other perſon of the ſome character. Upon the whole, it is certainly of moment, that one who deſires to educate his children in the fear of God, ſhould do it in an humble perſuaſion, that if he be not defective in his own duty, he will not be denied the bleſſing of ſucceſs. I could tell you ſome remarkable inſtances of parents who ſeemed to labour in vain for a long time, and yet were ſo happy as to ſee a change at laſt; and of ſome children in whom, even after the death of the parents, the ſeed which was early ſown, and ſeemed to have been entirely ſmothered, has, at laſt,

produced fruit. And indeed no leſs ſeems to follow from the promiſe, annexed to the command; Train up a child in the way he ſhould go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.

Having laid down theſe preliminaries, I ſhall ſay a few things upon the preſervation of the health of children. Perhaps you will think this belongs only to the phyſician: but, though a phyſician ought to be employed to apply remedies in dangerous caſes, any man, with a little reflection, may be allowed to form ſome judgment as to the ordinary means of their preſervation; nay, I cannot help being of opinion, that any other man is fitter than a phyſician for this purpoſe. His thoughts are ſo conſtantly taken up with the rules of his art, that it is an hundred to one he will preſcribe more me-

thods and medicines than can be uſed with ſafety.

The fundamental rules for preſerving the health of children, are cleanlineſs, liberty, and free air. By cleanlineſs, I do not mean keeping the outſide of their clothes in a proper condition to be ſeen before company, nor hindering them from fouling their hands and feet, when they are capable of going abroad; but keeping them dry in the night time, when young, and frequently waſhing their bodies with cold water, and other things of the ſame nature and tendency. The ſecond rule is liberty. All perſons, young and old, love liberty; and as far as it does them no harm, it will certainly do them good. Many a free-born ſubject is kept a ſlave for the firſt ten years of his life; and is ſo much handled and carried about by women in his in-

fancy, that the limbs and other parts of his body are frequently miſshapen, and the whole very much weakened: beſides, the ſpirits, when under a confinement, are generally in a dull and languiſhing ſtate. The beſt exerciſe in the world for children, is to let them romp and jump about, as ſoon as they are able, according to their own fancy. This in the country is beſt done in the fields; in a city a well-aired room is better than being ſent into the ſtreets under the care of a ſervant, very few of whom are able ſo far to curb their own inclinations, as to let the children follow theirs, even where they may do it with ſafety. As to free air, there is nothing more eſſentially neceſſary to the ſtrength and growth of animals and plants. If a few plants of any kind are ſown in a cloſe confined place, they commonly grow up tall,

ſmall, and very weak. I have ſeen a bed of beans in a garden, under the ſhade of a hedge or tree, very long and ſlender, which brought to my mind a young family of quality, trained up in a delicate manner, who if they grow at all, grow to length, but never to thickneſs. So univerſal is this, that I believe a body of a ſturdy or well-built make, is reckoned among them a coarſe and vulgar thing.

There is one thing with regard to ſervants, that I would particularly recommend to your attention. All children are liable to accidents; theſe may happen unavoidably; but do generally ariſe from the careleſsneſs of ſervants, and to this they are almoſt always attributed by parents. This diſpoſes all ſervants, good or bad, to conceal them from the parents, when they can poſſibly do it.

By this means, children often receive hurts in falls or otherwiſe, which, if known in time, might be eaſily remedied, but not being known either prove fatal, or make them lame or deformed. A near relation of mine has a high ſhoulder and a diſtorted waiſt from this very cauſe. To prevent ſuch accidents, it is neceſſary to take all pains poſſible to acquire the confidence of ſervants, to convince them of the neceſſity of concealing nothing. There are two diſpoſitions in parents, which hinder the ſervants from making diſcoveries; the firſt is when they are very paſſionate, and apt to ſtorm and rage againſt their ſervants, for every real or ſuppoſed neglect. Such perſons can never expect a confeſſion, which muſt be followed by ſuch terrible vengeance. The other is, when they are tender-hearted, or timorous

to exceſs, which makes them ſhew themſelves deeply affected or greatly terrified upon any little accident that befalls their children. In this caſe, the very beſt ſervants are unwilling to tell them through fear of making them miſerable. In ſuch caſes, therefore, I would adviſe parents, whetever may be their real opinions, to diſcover them as little as poſſible to their ſervants. Let them ſtill inculcate this maxim, that there ſhould be no ſecrets concerning children, kept from thoſe moſt nearly intereſted in them. And that there may be no temptation to ſuch conduct, let them always appear as cool and compoſed as poſſible, when any diſcovery is made, and be ready to forgive a real fault, in return for a candid acknowledgment.

LETTER II.

IF I miſtake not my laſt letter was concluded by ſome remarks on the means of trying ſervants to be careful of the ſafety of children, and ready to diſcover early and honeſtly any accidents that might happen to befall them. I muſt make ſome farther remarks upon ſervants. It is a ſubject of great importance, and inſeparably connected with what I have undertaken. You will find it extremely difficult to educate children properly, if the ſervants of the family do not conſpire in it; and impoſſible, if they are inclined to hinder it. In ſuch a caſe, the orders iſſued, or method laid down, will be neglected, where that is poſſible and ſafe; where neglect is unſafe, they will be unſucceſsfully or improperly

executed, and many times, in the hearing of the children, they will be either laughed at, or complained of and disapproved. The certain consequence of this is, that children will insensibly come to look upon the directions and cautions of their parents as unnecessary or unreasonable restraints. It is a known and very common way for servants to insinuate themselves into the affections of children, by granting them such indulgences as would be refused them by their parents, as well as concealing the faults which ought to be punished by parents, and they are often very successful in training them up to a most dangerous fidelity in keeping the secret.

Such is the evil to be feared, which ought to have been more largely described: let us now come to the remedy. The foundation, to be sure,

is to be very nice and careful in the choice of ſervants. This is commonly thought to be an extremely difficult matter, and we read frequently in publick papers the heavieſt complaints of bad ſervants. I am, however, one of thoſe who think the fault is at leaſt as often in the maſters. Good ſervants may certainly be had, and do generally incline of themſelves to be in good families, and when they find that they are ſo, do often continue very long in the ſame, without deſiring to remove. You ought, therefore, to be exceedingly ſcrupulous, and not without an evident neceſſity, to hire any ſervant but who ſeems to be ſober and pious. Indeed, I flatter myſelf, that a pious family is ſuch, as none but one who is either a ſaint or a hypocrite will be ſuppoſed to continue in. If any ſymptoms of the laſt cha-

racter appears, you need not be told what you ought to do.

The next thing, after the choice of ſervants, is to make conſcience of doing your duty to them, by example, inſtruction, admonition, and prayer. Your fidelity to them will naturally produce in them fidelity to you and yours, and that upon the very beſt principles. It will excite in them a deep ſenſe of gratitude, and at the ſame time fill them with ſentiments of the higheſt and moſt unfeigned eſteem. I could tell you of inſtances (you will however probably recollect ſome yourſelf) of ſervants who from their living comfortably, and receiving benefits in pious families, have preſerved ſuch a regard and attachment to their maſters, as have been little ſhort of idolatry. I ſhall juſt mention one—a worthy woman in this place, formerly ſer-

vant to one of my predeceſſors, and married many years ſince to a thriving tradeſman, continues to have ſuch an undiminiſhed regard to her maſter's memory, that ſhe cannot ſpeak of him without delight; keeps by her to this hour the newſpaper which gives an account of his death and character, and, I believe, would not exchange it for a bill or bond, to a very conſiderable ſum.

But the third and finiſhing direction with regard to ſervants, is to convince them, in a cool and diſpaſſionate manner, of the reaſonableneſs of your method of proceeding, that as it is dictated by conſcience, it is conducted with prudence. Thence it is eaſy to repreſent to them that it is their duty, inſtead of hindering its ſucceſs by oppoſition or negligence, to co-operate with it to the utmoſt of their power. It is not be-

low any man to reaſon in ſome caſes with his ſervants. There is a way of ſpeaking to them on ſuch ſubjects, by which you will loſe nothing of your dignity, but even corroborate your authority. While you manifeſt your firm reſolution, never to depart from your right and title to command; you may, notwithſtanding, at proper ſeaſons, and by way of condeſcenſion, give ſuch general reaſons for your conduct, as to ſhew that you are not acting by mere caprice or humour. Nay, even while you ſometimes inſiſt, that your command of itſelf ſhall be a law, and that you will not ſuffer it to be diſputed, nor be obliged to give a reaſon for it, you may eaſily ſhew them that this alſo is reaſonable. They may be told that you have the greateſt intereſt in the welfare of your children, the beſt opportunity of be-

ing appriſed as to the means of proſecuting it, and that there may be many reaſons for your orders which it is unneceſſary or improper for them to know.

Do not think that all this is exceſſive refinement, chimerical, or impoſſible. Servants are reaſonable creatures, and are beſt governed by a mixture of authority and reaſon. They are generally delighted to find themſelves treated as reaſonable, and will ſometimes diſcover a pride in ſhewing that they underſtand, as well as find a pleaſure in entering into your views. When they find, as they will every day by experience, the ſucceſs and benefit of a proper method of education, it will give them a high opinion of, and confidence in, your judgment; they will frequently conſult you in their own affairs, as well as implicitly fol-

low your directions in the management of yours. After all, the very higheſt inſtance of true greatneſs of mind, and the beſt ſupport of your authority, when you ſee neceſſary to interpoſe it, is not to be opinionative, or obſtinate, but willing to acknowledge or remit a real miſtake, if it is diſcreetly pointed out, even by thoſe in the loweſt ſtations. The application of theſe reflections will occur in ſeveral of the following branches of this ſubject.

The next thing I ſhall mention as neceſſary, in order to the education of children, is, to eſtabliſh as ſoon as poſſible, an entire and abſolute authority over them. This is a part of the ſubject which requires to be treated with great judgement and delicacy. I wiſh I may be able to do ſo. Opinions, like modes and faſhions, change continually upon

every point; neither is it eaſy to keep the juſt middle, without verging to one or other of the extremes. On this in particular, we have gone in this nation in general, from one extreme to the very utmoſt limits of the other. In the former age, both public and private, learned and religious education was carried on by mere dint of authority. This, to be ſure, was a ſavage and barbarous method, and was, in many inſtances, terrible and diſguſting to the youth. Now, on the other hand, not only ſeverity, but authority is often decried: perſuaſion, and every ſoft and gentle method, are recommended, in ſuch terms as plainly lead to a relaxation. I hope you will be convinced that the middle way is beſt. when you find it is recommended by, the Spirit of God in his word, Prov. xiii, 24. xix, 18. xxii, 15. You

will alſo find a caution againſt exceſs in this matter, Col. ii. 21.

I have ſaid above, that you ſhould "eſtabliſh as ſoon as poſſible an entire and abſolute authority." I would have it early, that it may be abſolute, and abſolute that it may not be ſevere. If parents are too long in beginning to exert their authority, they will find the taſk very difficult. Children, habituated to indulgence for a few of their firſt years, are exceedingly impatient of reſtraint, and if they happen to be of ſtiff or obſtinate tempers, can hardly be brought to an entire, at leaſt to a quiet and placid ſubmiſſion; whereas, if they are taken in time, there is hardly any temper but may be made to yield, and by early habit the ſubjection becomes quite eaſy to themſelves.

The authority ought alſo to be

abſolute, that it may not be ſevere. The more complete and uniform a parent's authority is, the offences will be more rare, puniſhment will be leſs needed, and the more gentle kind of correction will be abundantly ſufficient. We ſee every where about us examples of this. A parent that has once obtained, and knows how to preſerve authority, will do more by a look of diſpleaſure, than another by the moſt paſſionate words and even blows. It holds univerſally in families and ſchools, and even the greater bodies of men, the army and navy, that thoſe who keep the ſtricteſt diſcipline, give the feweſt ſtrokes. I have frequently remarked that parents, even of the ſofteſt tempers, and who are formed for the greateſt indulgence to their children, do, notwithſtanding correct them more frequently; and even more ſeverely,

though to very little purpoſe, than thoſe who keep up their authority. The reaſon is plain. Children by fooliſh indulgence become often ſo froward and petulant in their tempers, that they provoke their eaſy parents paſt all endurance; ſo that they are obliged, if not to ſtrike, at leaſt to ſcold them, in a manner as little to their own credit, as their children's profit.

There is not a more diſguſting ſight than the impotent rage of a parent who has no authority. Among the lower ranks of people, who are under no reſtraint from decency, you may ſometimes ſee a father or mother running out into the ſtreet after a child who is fled from them, with looks of fury and words of execration; and they are often ſtupid enough to imagine that neighbors or paſſengers will approve them

in this conduct, though in fact it fills every beholder with horror. There is a degree of the same fault to be seen in persons of better rank, tho' expressing itself somewhat differently. Ill words and altercations will often fall out between parents and children before company; a sure sign that there is a defect of government at home or in private. The parent stung with shame at the misbehavior or indiscretion of the child, desires to persuade the observers that it is not *his* fault, and thereby effectually convinces every person of reflection that it *is*.

I would therefore recommend to every parent to begin the establishment of authority much more early than is commonly supposed to be possible; that is to say, from about the age of eight or nine months. You will perhaps smile at this: but

I do assure you from experience, that by setting about it with prudence, deliberation, and attention, it may be in a manner completed by the age of twelve or fourteen months. Do not imagine I mean to bid you use the rod at that age; on the contrary, I mean to prevent the use of it in a great measure, and to point out a way by which children of sweet and easy tempers may be brought to such a habit of compliance, as never to need correction at all; and whatever their temper may be, so much less of this is sufficient, than upon any other supposition. This is one of my favourite schemes; let me try to explain and recommend it.

Habits in general may be very early formed in children. An association of ideas is, as it were, the parent of habit. If then, you can accustom your children to perceive that your

will muſt always prevail over theirs, when they are oppoſed, the thing is done, and they will ſubmit to it without difficulty or regret. To bring this about, as ſoon as they begin to ſhew their inclination by deſire or averſion, let ſingle inſtances be choſen now and then (not too frequently) to contradict them. For example, if a child ſhews a deſire to have any thing in his hand that he ſees, or has any thing in his hand with which he is delighted, let the parent take it from him, and when he does ſo, let no conſideration whatever make him reſtore it at that time. Then at a conſiderable interval, perhaps a whole day is little enough, eſpecially at firſt, let the ſame thing be repeated. In the mean time, it muſt be carefully obſerved, that no attempt ſhould be made to contradict the child in the intervals. Not the

leaſt appearance of oppoſition, if poſſible, ſhould be found between the will of the parent and that of the child, except in thoſe choſen caſes, when the parent muſt always prevail.

I think it neceſſary that thoſe attempts ſhould always be made and repeated at proper intervals by the ſame perſon. It is alſo better it ſhould be by the father than the mother or any female attendant, becauſe they will be neceſſarily obliged in many caſes to do things diſpleaſing to the child, as in dreſſing, waſhing, &c. which ſpoil the operation; neither is it neceſſary that they ſhould interpoſe, for when once a full authority is eſtabliſhed in one perſon it can eaſily be communicated to others, as far as is proper. Remember, however, that mother or nurſe ſhould never preſume to condole

with the child, or ſhew any ſigns of diſpleaſure at his being croſſed; but on the contrary, give every mark of approbation, and of their own ſubmiſſion, to the ſame perſon.

This experiment frequently repeated, will in a little time ſo perfectly habituate the child to yield to the parent whenever he interpoſes, that he will make no oppoſition. I can aſſure you from experience, having literally practiſed this method myſelf, that I never had a child of twelve months old, but who would ſuffer me to take any thing from him or her, without the leaſt mark of anger or diſſatisfaction; while they would not ſuffer any other to do ſo, without the bittereſt complaints. You will eaſily perceive how this is to be extended gradually and univerſally, from one thing to another, from contradicting to commanding

them. But this, and ſeveral other remarks upon eſtabliſhing and preſerving authority, muſt be referred to another letter.

LETTER III.

DEAR SIR,

THE theory laid down in my laſt letter, for eſtabliſhing an early and abſolute authority over children, is of much greater moment than, perhaps, you will immediately apprehend. There is a great diverſity in the temper and diſpoſition of children; and no leſs in the penetration, prudence, and reſolution of parents. From all theſe circumſtances, difficulties ariſe, which increaſe very faſt as the work is delayed. Some children have naturally very ſtiff and obſtinate tempers, and ſome

have a certain pride, or, if you pleaſe, greatneſs of mind, which makes them think it a mean thing to yield. This diſpoſition is often greatly ſtrengthened in thoſe of high birth, by the ideas of their own dignity and importance, inſtilled into them from their mother's milk. I have known a boy not ſix years of age, who made it a point of honour not to cry when he was beat, even by his parents. Other children have ſo ſtrong paſſions, or ſo great ſenſibility, that if they receive correction, they will cry immoderately, and either be, or ſeem to be, affected to ſuch a degree, as to endanger their health or life. Neither is it uncommon for the parents in ſuch a caſe to give up the point, and if they do not aſk pardon, at leaſt they give very genuine marks of repentance and ſorrow for what they have done.

I have ſaid this is not uncommon; but I may rather aſk you, whether you know any parents at all, who have ſo much prudence and firmneſs as not to be diſcouraged in the one caſe, or to relent in the other? At the ſame time it muſt always be remembered, that the correction is wholly loſt which does not produce abſolute ſubmiſſion: Perhaps I may ſay it is more than loſt, becauſe it will irritate inſtead of reforming them, and will inſtruct or perfect them in the art of overcoming their parents, which they will not fail to manifeſt on a future opportunity. It is ſurprizing to think how early children will diſcover the weak ſide of their parents, and what ingenuity they will ſhew in obtaining their favor or avoiding their diſpleaſure. I think I have obſerved a child in treaty or expoſ-

tulation with a parent, diſcover more conſummate policy, at ſeven years of age, than the parent himſelf, even when attempting to cajole him with artful evaſions and ſpecious promiſes. On all theſe accounts, it muſt be a vaſt advantage that a habit of ſubmiſſion ſhould be brought on ſo early, that even memory itſelf ſhall not be able to reach back to its beginning. Unleſs this is done, there are many caſes in which, after the beſt management, the authority will be imperfect; and ſome in which any thing that deſerves that name will be impoſſible. There are ſome families, not contemptible either in ſtation or character, in which the parents are literally and properly obedient to their children; are forced to do things againſt their will, and chidden if they diſcover the leaſt

backwardneſs to comply. If you know none ſuch, I am ſure I do.

Let us now proceed to the beſt means of preſerving authority, and the way in which it ought to be daily exerciſed. I will trace this to its very ſource. Whatever authority you exerciſe over either children or ſervants, or as a magiſtrate over other citizens, it ought to be dictated by conſcience, and directed by a ſenſe of duty. Paſſion or reſentment ought to have as little place as poſſible, or rather, to ſpeak properly, though few can boaſt of having arrived at full perfection, it ought to have no place at all. Reproof or correction given in a rage is always conſidered by him to whom it is adminiſtered, as the effect of weakneſs in you, and therefore the demerit of the offence will be either wholly denied or ſoon forgotten. I have

heard ſome parents often ſay, that they cannot correct their children unleſs they are angry; to whom I have uſually anſwered, then you ought not to correct them at all. Every one would be ſenſible, that for a magiſtrate to diſcover an intemperate rage in pronouncing ſentence againſt a criminal, would be highly indecent. Ought not parents to puniſh their children in the ſame diſpaſſionate manner? Ought they not to be at leaſt equally concerned to diſcharge their duty in the beſt manner, in one caſe as in the other?

He who would preſerve his authority over his children, ſhould be particularly watchful of his own conduct. You may as well pretend to force people to love what is not amiable, as to reverence what is not reſpectable. A decency of conduct, therefore, and dignity of deport-

ment is highly ſerviceable for the purpoſe we have now in view. Leſt this, however, ſhould be miſtaken, I muſt put in a caution, that I do not mean to recommend keeping children at too great a diſtance, by an uniform ſternneſs and ſeverity of carriage. This, I think, is not neceſſary, even when they are young; and it may, to children of ſome tempers, be very hurtful when they are old. By and by you ſhall receive from me a quite contrary direction. But by dignity of carriage, I mean parents ſhewing themſelves always cool and reaſonable in their own conduct; prudent and cautious in their converſation with regard to the reſt of mankind; not fretful or impatient, or paſſionately fond of their own peculiarities; and though gentle and affectionate to their children, yet avoiding levity in their

preſence. This, probably, is the meaning of the precept of the ancients, *Maxima debetur pueris reverentia.* I would have them chearful, yet ſerene. In ſhort, I would have their familiarity to be evidently an act of condeſcenſion. Believe it, my dear ſir, that which begets eſteem, will not fail to produce ſubjection.

That this may not be carried too far, I would recommend every expreſſion of affection and kindneſs to children when it is ſafe, that is to ſay, when their behaviour is ſuch as to deſerve it. There is no oppoſition at all between parental tenderneſs and parental authority. They are the beſt ſupports to each other. It is not only lawful, but will be of ſervice, that parents ſhould diſcover the greateſt fondneſs for children in infancy, and make them perceive

diſtinctly with how much pleaſure they gratify all their innocent inclinations. This, however, muſt always be done when they are quiet, gentle, and ſubmiſſive in their carriage. Some have found fault with giving them, for doing well, little rewards of ſweetmeats and playthings, as tending to make them mercenary, and leading them to look upon the indulgence of appetite as the chief good. This, I apprehend, is rather refining too much: the great point is, that they be rewarded for doing good, and not for doing evil. When they are croſs or froward, I would never buy peace, but force it. Nothing can be more weak and fooliſh, or more deſtructive of authority, than when children are noiſy and in ill humour, to give them or promiſe them ſomething to appeaſe them. When the Roman em-

perors began to give penſions and ſubſidies to the Northern nations to keep them quiet, a man might have foreſeen without the ſpirit of prophecy, who would be maſter in a little time. The caſe is exactly the ſame with children. They will ſoon avail themſelves of this uneaſineſs in their parents, command favors inſtead of begging them, and be inſolent when they ſhould be grateful.

The ſame conduct ought to be uniformly preſerved as children advance in years and underſtanding. Let parents try to convince them how much they have their real intereſt at heart. Sometimes children will make a requeſt, and receive a haſty or a froward denial: yet upon reflection the thing appears not to be unreaſonable, and finally it is granted; and whether it be right or wrong, ſometimes by the force of

importunity, it is extorted. If parents expect either gratitude or submiſſion for favours ſo ungraciouſly beſtowed, they will find themſelves egregiouſly miſtaken. It is their duty to proſecute, and it ought to be their comfort to ſee, the happineſs of their children; and therefore they ought to lay it down as a rule, never to give a ſudden or haſty refuſal; but, when any thing is propoſed to them, conſider deliberately and fully whether it is proper — and after that, either grant it cheerfully, or deny it firmly.

It is a noble ſupport of authority, when it is really and viſibly directed to the moſt important end. My meaning in this, I hope, is not obſcure. The end I conſider as moſt important is, the glory of God in the eternal happineſs and ſalvation of children. Whoever believes in a

future ſtate — whoever has a juſt ſenſe of the importance of eternity to himſelf, cannot fail to have a like concern for his offspring. This ſhould be his end both in inſtruction and government; and when it viſibly appears that he is under the conſtraint of conſcience, and that either reproof or correction are the fruit of ſanctified love, it will give them irreſiſtible force. I will tell you here, with all the ſimplicity neceſſary in ſuch a ſituation, what I have often ſaid in my courſe of paſtoral viſitation in families, where there is in many caſes, through want of judgment, as well as want of principle, a great neglect of authority. "Uſe your authority for God, and he will ſupport it. Let it always be ſeen that you are more diſpleaſed at ſin than at folly. What a ſhame is it, that if a child ſhall, through the in-

attention and levity of youth, break a diſh or a pane of the window, by which you may loſe the value of a few pence, you ſhould ſtorm and rage at him with the utmoſt fury, or perhaps beat him with unmerciful ſeverity; but if he tells a lie, or takes the name of God in vain or quarrels with his neighbours, he ſhall eaſily obtain pardon; or perhaps, if he is reproved by others, you will juſtify him, and take his part."

You cannot eaſily believe the weight that it gives to family authority, when it appears viſibly to proceed from a ſenſe of duty, and to be itſelf an act of obedience to God. This will produce coolneſs and compoſure in the manner, it will direct and enable a parent to mix every expreſſion of heart felt-tenderneſs, with the moſt ſevere and needful reproofs. It will make it quite con-

ſiſtent to affirm, that the rod itſelf is an evidence of love, and that it is true of every pious parent on earth, which is ſaid of our Father in heaven: "Whom the Lord loveth he chaſteneth, and ſcourgeth every ſon whom he receiveth. If ye endure chaſtening, God dealeth with you as with ſons: for what ſon is he whom the Father chaſteneth not? But if ye are without chaſtiſement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye baſtards and not ſons." With this maxim in your eye, I would recommend, that ſolemnity take the place of, and be ſubſtituted for ſeverity. When a child, for example, diſcovers a very depraved diſpoſition, inſtead of multiplying ſtripes in proportion to the reiterated provocations, every circumſtance ſhould be introduced, whether in reproof or puniſhment, that can either diſcover the ſeriouſ-

neſs of your mind, or make an impreſſion of awe and reverence upon his. The time may be fixed before hand — at ſome diſtance — the Lord's day — his own birth-day — with many other circumſtances that may be ſo ſpecial that it is impoſſible to enumerate them. I ſhall juſt repeat what you have heard often from me in converſation, that ſeveral pious perſons made it an invariable cuſtom, as ſoon as their children could read, never to correct them, but after they had read over all the paſſages of ſcripture which commanded it, and generally accompanied it with prayer to God for his bleſſing. I know well with what ridicule this would be treated by many, if publicly mentioned, but that does not ſhake my judgment in the leaſt, being fully convinced that it is a moſt excellent method, and that it is impoſſible to

blot from the minds of children, while they live upon earth, the impreſſions that are made by theſe means, or to abate the veneration they will retain for the parents who acted ſuch a part.

Suffer me here to obſerve to you, that ſuch a plan as the above requires judgment, reflection, and great attention in your whole conduct. Take heed that there be nothing admitted in the intervals that counteracts it. Nothing is more deſtructive of authority, than frequent diſputes and chiding upon ſmall matters. This is often more irkſome to children than parents are aware of. It weakens their influence inſenſibly, and in time makes their opinion and judgment of little weight, if not wholly contemptible. As before I recommended dignity in your general conduct, ſo in a parti-

cular manner, let the utmoſt care be taken not to render authority cheap, by too often interpoſing it. There is really too great a riſk to be run in every ſuch inſtance. If parents will be deciding directly, and cenſuring every moment, it is to be ſuppoſed they will be ſometimes wrong; and when this evidently appears, it will take away from the credit of their opinion, and weaken their influence, even where it ought to prevail.

Upon the whole, to encourage you to chooſe a wiſe plan, and to adhere to it with firmneſs, I can venture to aſſure you, that there is no doubt of your ſucceſs. To ſubdue a youth after he has been long accuſtomed to indulgence, I take to be in all caſes difficult, and in many impoſſible; but while the body is tender, to bring the mind to ſubmiſſion,

to train up a child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, I know is not impoſſible: and he who hath given the command, can ſcarcely fail to follow it with his bleſſing.

I am, &c.

LETTER IV.

DEAR SIR,

HAVING now finiſhed what I propoſed to ſay on the means of eſtabliſhing and preſerving authority, I ſhall proceed to another very important branch of the ſubject, and beg your particular attention to it, viz. Example. Do not, however, ſuppoſe that I mean to enter on that moſt beaten of all topics, the influence of example in general, or to write a diſſertation on the common ſaying, that 'example teaches

better than precept.' An able writer, doubtleſs, might ſet even this in ſome new lights, and make it a ſtrong argument with every good man to pay the ſtricteſt attention to his viſible conduct. What we ſee every day has a conſtant and powerful influence on our temper and carriage. Hence ariſe national characters and national manners, and every characteriſtic diſtinction of age or place. But of this I have already ſaid enough.

Neither is it my purpoſe to put you in mind of the importance of example to enforce inſtruction, or of the ſhamefulneſs of a man's pretending to teach others what he deſpiſes himſelf. This ought in the ſtrongeſt manner to be laid before paſtors and other public perſons, who often defeat habitually by their lives, what they attempt to do occa-

ſionally in the execution of their office. If there remains the leaſt ſuſpicion of your being of that character, theſe letters would have been quite in another ſtrain. I believe there are ſome perſons of very irregular lives, who have ſo much natural light in their conſciences, that they would be grieved or perhaps offended, if their children ſhould tread exactly in their own ſteps: but even theſe, and much leſs others, who are more hardened, can never be expected to undertake or carry on the ſyſtem of education, we are now endeavoring to illuſtrate. Suffer me, however, before I proceed, to make one remark: when I have heard of parents who have been watched by their own children, when drunk, and taken care of, leſt they ſhould meet with injury or hurtful accidents—or whoſe intem-

perate rage and horrid blaſphemies, have, without ſcruple, been expoſed both to children and ſervants—or who, as has been ſometimes the caſe, were ſcarcely at the pains to conceal their criminal amours, even from their own offspring—I have often reflected on the degree of impiety in principle, or ſearedneſs of conſcience, or both united, neceſſary to ſupport them in ſuch circumſtances. Let us leave all ſuch with a mixture of pity and diſdain.

By mentioning example, therefore, as an important and neceſſary branch of the education of children, I have chiefly in view a great number of particulars, which, ſeperately taken, are, or at leaſt are ſuppoſed to be, of little moment; yet by their union or frequent repetition, produce important and laſting effects. I have alſo in view to in-

clude all that claſs of actions in which there is, or may be, a coincidence between the duties of piety and politeneſs, and by means of which, the one is incorporated with the other. Theſe are to be introduced under the head of example, becauſe they will appear there to beſt advantage, and becauſe many of them can hardly be taught or underſtood in any other way.

This, I apprehend, you will readily approve of, becauſe, though you juſtly conſider religion as the moſt eſſentially neceſſary qualification, you mean, at the ſame time, that your children ſhould be fitted for an appearance becoming their ſtation in the world. It is alſo the more neceſſary, as many are apt to disjoin wholly the ideas of piety and politeneſs, and to ſuppoſe them not only diſtinct, but incompatible. This is

a dangerous ſnare to many parents, who think there is no medium between the groſſeſt ruſticity and giving way to all the vanity and extravagance of a diſſipated life. Perſons truly pious have often by their conduct given countenance to this miſtake. By a certain narrowneſs of ſentiment and behavior, they have become themſelves, and rendered their children, unfit for a general intercourſe with mankind, or the public duties of an active life.

You know, Sir, as much as any man, how contrary my opinion and conduct have been upon this ſubject. I cannot help thinking that true religion is not only conſiſtent with, but neceſſary to the perfection of true politeneſs. There is a noble ſentiment to this purpoſe illuſtrated at conſiderable length in the Port Royal Eſſays, viz. "That worldly

"politeneſs is no more than an imi-
"tation or imperfect copy of chriſ-
"tian charity, being the pretence, or
"outward appearance, of that defer-
"ence to the judgment, and atten-
"tion to the intereſt of others,
"which a true Chriſtian has as the
"rule of his life, and the diſpoſition
"of his heart."* I have at preſent in my mind the idea of certain perſons, whom you will eaſily gueſs at, of the firſt quality: one or two of the male, and twice that number at

* The authors of theſe Eſſays, commonly called by writers who make mention of them, the Gentlemen of Port-Royal, were a ſociety of Janſeniſts in France, who uſed to meet at that place; all of whom were eminent for literature, and many of them of high rank, as will be evident by mentioning the names of Paſcal, Arnaud, and the Prince of Conti. The laſt was the author of the eſſay from which the above remark is taken.

leaſt of the female ſex, in whom piety and high ſtation are united. What a ſweetneſs and complacency of countenance, what a condeſcenſion and gentleneſs of manners, ariſing from the humility of the goſpel being joined to the refined elegance inſeparable from their circumſtances in life!

Be pleaſed to follow me to the other extreme of human ſociety. Let us go to the remoteſt cottage of the wildeſt country, and viſit the family that inhabits it. If they are pious, there is a certain humanity and good-will attending their ſimplicity, which make it highly agreeable. There is alſo a decency in their ſentiments, which, flowing from the dictates of conſcience, is as pleaſing in all reſpects as the reſtraint impoſed by the rules of good-breeding, with which the perſons here in

view have little opportunity of being acquainted. On the contrary, unbred country people, when without principle, have generally a savageneſs and brutality in their carriage, as contrary to good manners as to piety itſelf. No one has a better opportunity of making obſervations of this kind, than I have from my office and ſituation; and I can aſſure you, that religion is the great poliſher of the common people. It even enlarges their underſtandings as to other things. Having been accuſtomed to exerciſe their judgment and reflection on religious ſubjects, they are capable of talking more ſenſibly on agriculture, politics, or any common topic of indifferent converſation.

Let me not forget to ſpeak of the middle ranks of life. Here, alſo, I ſcruple not to affirm, that whatever

ſphere a man has been bred in, or attained to, religion is not an injury, but an addition to the politeneſs of his carriage. They ſeem indeed to confeſs their relation to one another, by their reciprocal influence. In promiſcuous converſation, as true religion contributes to make men decent or courteous, ſo true politeneſs guards them effectually from any outrage againſt piety or purity. If I were unhappily thrown into mixed or dangerous company, I ſhould not apprehend any thing improper for me to hear from the moſt wicked man, but from the greateſt clown. I have known gentlemen, who were infidels in principle, and whoſe lives, I had reaſon to believe, were privately very bad, yet in converſation they were guarded, decent, and improving; whereas if there come into company a rough, unpo-

liſhed, country gentleman, no man can promiſe that he will not break out into ſome prophane exclamation, or obſcene alluſion, which it would be wrong to attribute to impiety, ſo much as to rudeneſs and want of reflection.

I have been already too long in the introduction, and in giving the reaſons for what I propoſe ſhall make a part of this branch of the ſubject, and yet I muſt make another preliminary remark: there is the greater neceſſity for uniting piety and politeneſs in the ſyſtem of family example, that as piety is by that means inculcated with the greateſt advantage, ſo politeneſs can ſcarcely be attained in any other way. It is very rare that perſons reach a higher degree of politeneſs, than what they have been formed to in the families of their parents and other near relations. True politeneſs does

not conſiſt in dreſs, or a few motions of the body, but in a habit of ſentiment and converſation: the firſt may be learned from a maſter, and in a little time; the laſt only by a long and conſtant intercourſe with thoſe who poſſeſs, and are therefore able to impart it. As the difficulty is certainly greateſt with the female ſex, becauſe they have fewer opportunities of being abroad in the world, I ſhall take an example from among them.

Suppoſe a man of low birth living in the country, by induſtry and parſimony has become wealthy, and has a daughter to whom he deſires to give a genteel education. He ſends her to your city to a boarding ſchool, for the other which is nearer me, you are pleaſed not to think ſufficient for that purpoſe. She will ſpeedily learn to buy expenſive and faſhionable

clothes, and moſt probably be in the very height and extravagance of the faſhion, one of the ſureſt ſigns of a vulgar taſte. She may alſo, if her capacity is tolerable, get rid of her ruſtic air and carriage: and if it be better than ordinary, learn to diſcourſe upon whatever topic is then in vogue, and comes in immediately after the weather, which is the beginning of all converſation. But as her reſidence is only for a time, ſhe returns home, where ſhe can ſee or hear nothing but as before. Muſt ſhe not relapſe ſpeedily into the ſame vulgarity of ſentiment, and perhaps the ſame provincial dialect, to which ſhe had been accuſtomed from her youth? Neither is it impoſſible that ſhe may juſt retain as much of the city ceremonial, as by the incongruous mixture, will render her ridiculous. There is but one ſingle

way of eſcape, which we have ſeen ſome young women of merit and capacity take, which is to contract an intimacy with perſons of liberal ſentiments and higher breeding, and be as little among their relations as poſſible. I have given this deſcription to convince you that it is in their father's houſe, and by the converſation and manners to which they are there accuſtomed, that children muſt be formed to politeneſs, as well as to virtue. I carry this matter ſo far, that I think it a diſadvantage to be bred too high, as well as too low. I do not deſire, and have always declined any opportunities given me of having my children reſide long in families of high rank. I was afraid they would contract an air and manner unſuitable to what was to be their condition for the remainder of their lives. I would wiſh to give

my children as juſt, as noble, and as elegant ſentiments as poſſible, to fit them for rational converſation, but a dreſs and carriage ſuited for their ſtation, and not inconſiſtent with the meekneſs of the goſpel.

Though the length of this digreſſion, or explanatory introduction, has made it impoſſible to ſay much in this letter on forming children's character and manners by example, before I conclude I will give one direction which is pretty comprehenſive. Give the utmoſt attention to the manner of receiving and entertaining ſtrangers in your family, as well as to your ſentiments and expreſſions with regard to them when they are gone. I am fully perſuaded that the plaineſt and ſhorteſt road to real politeneſs of carriage, and the moſt amiable ſort of hoſpitality, is to think of others juſt as a chriſtian

ought, and to expreſs theſe thoughts with modeſty and candour. This will keep you at an equal diſtance from a ſurly and moroſe carriage on the one hand, and a fawning cringing obſequiouſneſs, or unneceſſary compliment and ceremony, on the other. As theſe are circumſtances to which children in early life are very attentive, and which occur conſtantly in their preſence, it is of much moment what ſentiments they imbibe from the behavior of their parents. I do not mean only their learning from them an eaſe and dignity of carriage, or the contrary; but alſo ſome moral or immoral habits of the laſt conſequence. If they perceive you happy and lifted up with the viſit or countenance of perſons of high rank, ſolicitous to entertain them properly, ſubmiſſive and flattering in your manner of ſpeaking to them,

vain, and apt to boaſt of your connection with them: and if, on the contrary, they perceive you hardly civil to perſons of inferior ſtations or narrow circumſtances, impatient of their company, and immediately ſeizing the opportunity of their departure to deſpiſe or expoſe them: will not this naturally lead the young mind to conſider riches and high ſtation as the great ſources of earthly happineſs? Will it not give a ſtrong bias to their whole deſires and ſtudies, as well as viſibly affect their behavior to others in ſocial life? Do not think that this is too nice and refined: the firſt impreſſions upon young perſons, though inconſiderable in themſelves, have often a great as well as laſting effect.

I remember to have read, many years ago, in the archbiſhop of Cambray's education of a daughter, an

advice to parents to let their children perceive that they eſteem others, not according to their ſtation or outward ſplendor, but their virtue and real worth. It muſt be acknowledged, that there are ſome marks of reſpect due to men, according to their place in civil life, which a good man would not fail to give them, even for conſcience ſake. But it is an eaſy matter, in perfect conſiſtency with this, by more frequent voluntary intercourſe, as well as by our uſual manner of ſpeaking, to pay that homage which is due to piety, to expreſs our contempt or indignation at vice, or meanneſs of every kind. I think it no inconſiderable addition to this remark, that we ſhould be as cautious of eſtimating *happineſs* as *virtue* by outward ſtation; and keep at the ſame diſtance

from envying as from flattering the great.

But what I muſt particularly recommend to you, is to avoid that common but deteſtable cuſtom of receiving perſons with courteſy, and all the marks of real friendſhip, in your houſe; and the moment they are gone, falling upon their character and conduct with unmerciful ſeverity. I am ſenſible there are ſome caſes, though they are not numerous, in which it may be lawful to ſay of others behind their back, what it would be at leaſt imprudent or unſafe to ſay in their own preſence. Neither would I exclude parents from the advantage of pointing out to their children the miſtakes and vices of others, as a warning or leſſon of inſtruction to themſelves. Yet as detraction in general is to be avoided at all times; ſo, of all others, the moſt

improper ſeaſon to ſpeak to any man's prejudice, is, after you have juſt received and treated him in a hoſpitable manner, as a friend. There is ſomething mean in it, and ſomething ſo nearly allied to hypocriſy and diſingenuity, that I would not chooſe to act ſuch a part even to thoſe whom I would take another opportunity of pointing out to my children, as perſons whoſe converſation they ſhould avoid, and whoſe conduct they ſhould abhor.

In every ſtation, and among all ranks, this rule is often tranſgreſſed; but there is one point in which it is more frequently and more univerſally tranſgreſſed than in any other, and that is by turning the abſent into ridicule, for any thing odd or awkward in their behavior. I am ſorry to ſay that this is an indecorum that prevails in ſeveral families of

high rank. A man of inferior ſtation, for ſome particular reaſon, is admitted to their company. He is perhaps not well acquainted with the rules of politeneſs, and the preſence of his ſuperiors, to which he is unaccuſtomed, increaſes his embarraſſment. Immediately on his departure, a petulant boy or giddy girl will ſet about mimicking his motions and repeating his phraſes, to the great entertainment of the company, who apparently derive much ſelf-ſatisfaction from a circumſtance in which there is no merit at all. If any perſon renders himſelf juſtly ridiculous, by affecting a character which he is unable to ſuſtain, let him be treated with the contempt he deſerves. But there is ſomething very ungenerous in people treating their inferiors with diſdain, merely becauſe the ſame providence that

made their anceſtors great, left the others in a lower ſphere.

It has often given me great indignation to ſee a gentleman, or his wife, of real worth, good underſtanding, but ſimple manners, deſpiſed and ridiculed, for a defect which they could not remedy, and that often by perſons the moſt inſignificant and frivolous, who never uttered a ſentence in their lives that deſerved to be remembered or repeated. But if this conduct is ungenerous in the great, how diverting is it to ſee the ſame diſpoſition carried down through all the inferior ranks, and ſhewing itſelf in a ſilly triumph of every claſs over thoſe who are ſuppoſed to be below them? I have known many perſons, whoſe ſtation was not ſuperior to mine, take great pleaſure in expreſſing their contempt of *vul-*

gar ideas and *low life;* and even a tradeſman's wife, in a city, glorying over the unpoliſhed manners of her country acquaintance.

Upon the whole, as there is no diſpoſition to which young perſons are more prone than deriſion, or, as the author I cited above, Mr. Fenelon, expreſſes it, *un eſprit mocqueur et malin*, — and few that parents are more apt to cheriſh, under the idea of its being a ſign of ſprightlineſs and vivacity, — there is none which a pious and prudent parent ſhould take greater care to reſtrain by admonition, and deſtroy by a contarry example. I am,

Sir, &c.

LETTER V.

DEAR SIR,

LET us now proceed to consider more fully what it is to form children to piety by example. This is a subject of great extent, and, perhaps, of difficulty. The difficulty, however, does not consist either in the abstruseness of the arguments, or uncertainty of the facts, upon which they are founded, but in the minuteness or trifling nature of the circumstances taken separately, which makes them often either wholly unnoticed or greatly undervalued. It is a subject, which, if I mistake not, is much more easily conceived than explained. If you have it constantly in your mind, that your whole visible

deportment will powerfully, though inſenſibly, influence the opinions and future conduct of your children, it will give a form or colour, if I may ſpeak ſo, to every thing you ſay or do. There are numberleſs and nameleſs inſtances in which this reflection will make you ſpeak, or refrain from ſpeaking, add, or abſtain from, ſome circumſtances of action, in what you are engaged; nor will this be accompanied with any reluctance in the one caſe, or conſtraint in the other.

But I muſt not content myſelf with this. My profeſſion gives me many opportunities of obſerving, that the impreſſion made by general truths, however juſtly ſtated or fully proved, is ſeldom ſtrong or laſting. Let me therefore deſcend to practice, and illuſtrate what I have ſaid by examples. Here again a difficulty occurs. If I give a particular inſtance,

it will perhaps operate no farther than recommending a like conduct in circumſtances the ſame, or perfectly ſimilar. For example, I might ſay, in ſpeaking to the diſadvantage of abſent perſons, I beſeech you never fail to add the reaſon why you take ſuch liberty, and indeed never take that liberty at all, but when it can be juſtified upon the principles of prudence, candor, and charity. A thing may be right in itſelf, but children ſhould be made to ſee why it is right. This is one inſtance of examplary caution, but if I were to add a dozen more to it, they would only be detached precepts; whereas I am anxious to take in the whole extent of edifying example. In order to this, let me range or divide what I have to ſay, under diſtinct heads. A parent

who wiſhes that his example ſhould be a ſpeaking leſſon to his children, ſhould order it ſo as to convince them, that he conſiders religion as neceſſary, reſpectable, amiable, profitable, and delightful. I am ſenſible that ſome of theſe characters may ſeem ſo nearly allied, as ſcarcely to admit of a diſtinction. Many parts of a virtuous conduct fall under more than one of theſe denominations. Some actions perhaps deſerve all the epithets here mentioned, without exception and without prejudice one of another. But the diſtinctions ſeem to me very uſeful, for there is certainly a claſs of actions which may be ſaid to belong peculiarly, or at leaſt eminently, to each of theſe different heads. By taking them ſeparately, therefore, it will ſerve to point out more fully the extent of your duty, and to ſuggeſt it when it

would not otherwiſe occur, as well as to ſet the obligation to it in the ſtronger light.

1. You ſhould, in your general deportment, make your children perceive that you look upon religion as abſolutely neceſſary. I place this firſt, becauſe it appears to me firſt both in point of order and force. I am far from being againſt taking all pains to ſhew that religion is rational and honourable in itſelf, and vice the contrary: but I deſpiſe the fooliſh refinement of thoſe, who, thro' fear of making children mercenary, are for being very ſparing of the mention of heaven or hell. Such conduct is apt to make them conceive, that a neglect of their duty is only falling ſhort of a degree of honor and advantage, which, for the gratification of their paſſions, they are very willing to relinquiſh. Many

parents are much more ready to tell their children such or such a thing is mean, and not like a gentleman, than to warn them that they will thereby incur the displeasure of their Maker. But when the practices are really and deeply criminal, as in swearing and lying, it is quite improper to rest the matter there. I admit that they are both mean, and that justice ought to be done to them in this respect, but I contend that it should only be a secondary consideration.

Let not human reasonings be put in the balance with divine wisdom. The care of our souls is represented in scripture as the one thing needful. He makes a miserable bargain, who gains the whole world and loses his own soul. It is not the native beauty of virtue or the outward credit of it, or the inward satisfaction ari-

ſing from it, or even all theſe combined together, that will be ſufficient to change our natures and govern our conduct; but a deep conviction that unleſs we are reconciled to God we ſhall without doubt periſh everlaſtingly.

You will ſay, this is very true and very fit for a pulpit, but what is that claſs of actions that ſhould impreſs it habitually on the minds of children? Perhaps you will even ſay, what one action will any good man be guilty of — much more habitual conduct — that can tend to weaken their belief of it? This is the very point which I mean to explain. It is certainly poſſible that a man may at ſtated times give out that he looks upon religion to be abſolutely neceſſary, and yet his conduct in many particulars, may have no tendency to impreſs this on the minds of his chil-

dren. If he ſuffers particular religious duties to be eaſily diſplaced, to be ſhortened, poſtponed, or omitted, upon the moſt trifling accounts, depend upon it, this will make religion in general ſeem leſs neceſſary, to thoſe who obſerve it. If an unpleaſant day will keep a man from public worſhip, when, perhaps, a hurricane will not keep him from an election meeting — if he chooſes to take phyſic, or give it to his children on the Lord's day, when it could be done with equal eaſe on the day before or after — if he will more readily allow his ſervants to pay a viſit to their friends on that day than any other, though he has reaſon to believe they will ſpend it in junketing and idleneſs — it will not be eaſy to avoid ſuſpecting that worldly advantage is what determines his choice.

Take an example or two more on this head. Suppoſing a man uſually to worſhip God in his family; if he ſometimes omit it—if he allow every little buſineſs to interfere with it—if company will make him diſpenſe with it, or ſhift it from its proper ſeaſon—believe me, the idea of religion being every man's firſt and great concern, is in a good meaſure weakened if not wholly loſt. It is a very nice thing in religion to know the real connection between, and the proper mixture of ſpirit and form. The form without the ſpirit is good for nothing: but on the other hand, the ſpirit without the form, never yet exiſted. I am of opinion that punctual and even ſcrupulous regularity in all thoſe duties that occur periodically, is the way to make them eaſy and pleaſant to thoſe who attend them.

They alſo become, like all other habits, in ſome degree neceſſary; ſo that thoſe who have been long accuſtomed to them, feel an uneaſineſs in families where they are generally or frequently neglected. I cannot help alſo mentioning to you, the great danger of paying and receiving viſits on the Lord's day, unleſs when it is abſolutely neceſſary. It is a matter not merely difficult, but wholly impracticable, in ſuch caſes, to guard effectually againſt improper ſubjects of converſation. Nor is this all; for let the converſation be what it will, I contend that the duties of the family and the cloſet are fully ſufficient to employ the whole time; which muſt therefore be waſted or miſapplied by the intercourſe of ſtrangers.

I only further obſerve, that I know no circumſtance from which

your opinion of the neceſſity of religion will appear with the greater clearneſs, or carry it in greater force than your behaviour towards and treatment of your children in time of dangerous ſickneſs. Certainly there is no time in their whole lives when the neceſſity appears more urgent, or the opportunity more favorable, for impreſſing their minds with a ſenſe of the things that belong to their peace. What ſhall we ſay then of thoſe parents, who through fear of alarming their minds, and augmenting their diſorder, will not ſuffer any mention to be made to them of the approach of death, or the importance of eternity? I will relate to you an example of this. A young gentleman of eſtate in my pariſh, was taken ill of a dangerous fever in a friend's houſe at a diſtance. I went to ſee him in his illneſs, and

his mother, a widow lady, intreated me not to ſay any thing alarming to him, and not to pray with him, but to go to prayer in another room, wherein ſhe wiſely obſerved, it would have the ſame effect. The young man himſelf ſoon found that I did not act as he had expected, and was ſo impatient that it became neceſſary to give him the true reaſon. On this he inſiſted, in the moſt poſitive manner, that all reſtriction ſhould be taken off, which was done. What was the conſequence? He was exceedingly pleaſed and compoſed; and if this circumſtance did not haſten, it certainly neither hindered nor retarded his recovery.

Be pleaſed to remark, that the young gentleman here ſpoken of, neither was at that time, nor is yet, ſo far as I am able to judge, truly religious; and therefore I have form-

ed a fixed opinion, that in this, as in many other inſtances, the wiſdom of man diſappoints itſelf. Pious advice and conſolation, if but tolerably adminiſtered in ſickneſs, are not only uſeful to the ſoul, but ſerve particularly to calm an agitated mind, to bring the animal ſpirits to an eaſy flow, and the whole frame into ſuch a ſtate as will beſt favor the operation of medicine, or the efforts of the conſtitution, to throw off or conquer the diſeaſe.

Suffer me to wander a little from my ſubject, by obſerving to you, that as I do not think the great are to be much envied for any thing, ſo they are truly and heartily to be pitied for the deception that is uſually put upon them by flattery and falſe tenderneſs. Many of them are brought up with ſo much delicacy, that they are never ſuffered to ſee any miſera-

ble or afflicting object, nor, so far as can be hindered, to hear any affecting story of distress. If they themselves are sick, how many absurd and palpable lies are told them by their friends? and as for physicians I may safely say, few of them are much conscience-bound in this matter. Now, let the success of these measures be what it will, the only fruit to be reaped from them is to make a poor dying sinner mistake his or her condition, and vainly dream of earthly happiness, while hastening to the pit of perdition. But as I said before, men are often taken in their own craftiness. It oftentimes happens that such persons by an ignorant servant, or officious neighbour, or some unlucky accident, make a sudden discovery of their true situation, and the shock frequently proves fatal. — Oh! how

much more desirable is it—how much more like the reason of men, as well as the faith of christians,—to consider and prepare for what must inevitably come to pass? I cannot easily conceive any thing more truly noble, than for a person in health and vigor, in honor and opulence, by voluntary reflection to sympathize with others in distress; and by a well founded confidence in divine mercy, to obtain the victory over the fear of death.

2. You ought to live so as to make religion appear respectable. Religion is a venerable thing in itself, and it spreads an air of dignity over a person's whole deportment. I have seen a common tradesman, merely because he was a man of true piety and undeniable worth, treated by his children, apprentices, and servants, with a much greater degree

of deference and ſubmſſion, than is commonly given to men of ſuperior ſtation, without that character. Many of the ſame meanneſſes are avoided, by a gentleman from a principle of honor, and by a good man from a principle of conſcience. The firſt keeps out of the company of common people, becauſe they are below him; the laſt is cautious of mixing with them, becauſe of that levity and profanity that is to be expected from them. If, then, religion is really venerable when ſincere, a reſpectable conduct ought to be maintained, as a proof of your own integrity, as well as to recommend it to your children. To this add, if you pleaſe, that as reverence is the peculiar duty of children to their parents, any thing that tends to leſſen it, is more deeply felt by them than by others who obſerve it. When

I have ſeen a parent, in the preſence of his child, meanly wrangling with his ſervant, telling extravagant ſtories, or otherwiſe expoſing his vanity, credulity, or folly, I have felt juſt the ſame proportion of ſympathy and tenderneſs for the one, that I did of contempt or indignation at the other.

What has been ſaid, will, in part, explain the errors which a parent ought to ſhun, & what circumſtances he ought to attend to, that religion may appear reſpectable. All meanneſſes whether of ſentiment, converſation, dreſs, manners, or employment, are carefully to be avoided. You will apply this properly to yourſelf. I may, however, juſt mention, that there is a conſiderable difference in all theſe particulars, according to men's different ſtations. The ſame

actions are mean in one ſtation, that are not ſo in another. The thing itſelf, however, ſtill remains; as there is an order and cleanlineſs at the table of tradeſmen, that is different from the elegance of a gentleman's, or the ſumptuouſneſs of a prince's or nobleman's. But to make the matter ſtill plainer by particular examples. I look upon talkativeneſs and vanity to be among the greateſt enemies to dignity. It is needleſs to ſay how much vanity is contrary to true religion; and as to the other, which may ſeem rather an infirmity than a ſin, we are expreſsly cautioned againſt it, and commanded to be ſwift to hear, and ſlow to ſpeak. Sudden anger, too, and loud clamorous ſcolding, are at once contrary to piety and dignity. Parents ſhould, therefore, acquire as much as poſſible, a compoſure of ſpi-

rit, and meekneſs of language; nor are there many circumſtances that will more recommend religion to children, when they ſee that this ſelf-command is the effect of principle and a ſenſe of duty.

There is a weakneſs I have obſerved in many parents to ſhew a partial fondneſs for ſome of their children, to the neglect, and in many caſes approaching to a jealouſy or hatred of others. Sometimes we ſee a mother diſcover an exceſſive partiality to a handſome daughter, in compariſon of thoſe that are more homely in their figure. This is a barbarity, which would be truly incredible, did not experience prove that it really exiſts. One would think they ſhould rather be excited by natural affection, to give all poſſible encouragement to thoſe who labour under a diſadvantage, and beſtow every attainable accompliſh-

ment to balance the defects of outward form. At other times we see a partiality which cannot be accounted for at all, where the most ugly, peevish, froward child of the whole family, is the favorite of both parents. Reason ought to counteract these errors; but piety ought to extirpate them entirely. I do not stay to mention the bad effects that flow from them, my purpose being only to shew the excellence of that character which is exempted from them.

The real dignity of religion will also appear in the conduct of a good man towards his servants. It will point out the true and proper distinction between condescention and meanness. Humility is the very spirit of the gospel. Therefore, hear your servants with patience, examine their conduct with candor, treat

them with all the humanity and gentleneſs that is conſiſtent with unremitted authority: when they are ſick, viſit them in perſon, provide remedies for them, ſympathize with them, and ſhew them that you do ſo; take care of their intereſts; aſſiſt them with your counſel and influence to obtain what is their right. But, on the other hand, never make yourſelf their proper conpanion: do not ſeem to taſte their ſociety; do not hear their jokes, or aſk their news, or tell them yours. Believe me, this will never make you either belov'd or eſteem'd by your ſervants themſelves; and it will greatly derogate from the dignity of true religion in the eyes of your children. Suffer me alſo to caution you againſt the moſt unjuſt and illiberal practice, of exerciſing your wit in humorous ſtrokes upon your ſervants

before company, or while they wait at table. I do not know any thing ſo evidently mean, that is at the ſame time ſo common. It is I think, juſt ſuch a cowardly thing as to beat a man who is bound; becauſe the ſervant, however happy a repartee might occur to him, is not at liberty to anſwer, but at the riſk of having his bones broken. In this as in many other particulars, reaſon, refinement and liberal manners, teach exactly the ſame thing with religion; and I am happy in being able to add, that religion is generally the moſt powerful as well as the moſt uniform principle of decent conduct.

I ſhall have done with this particular, when I have obſerved, that thoſe who are engaged in public, or what I may call political life, have an excellent opportunity of making religion appear truly reſpectable.

What I mean is, by ſhewing themſelves firm and incorruptible, in ſupporting thoſe meaſures that appear beſt calculated for promoting the intereſt of religion, and the good of mankind. In all theſe caſes, I admire that man who has principles, whoſe principles are known, and whom every body deſpairs of being able to ſeduce, or bring over to the oppoſite intereſt. I do not commend furious and intemperate zeal. Steadineſs is a much better, and quite a different thing. I would contend with any man who ſhould ſpeak moſt calmly, but I would alſo contend with him who ſhould act moſt firmly. As for your placebo's, your prudent, courtly, compliant gentlemen, whoſe vote in aſſembly will tell you where they dined the day before, I hold them very cheap indeed, as you very well know. I do

not enter further into this argument, but conclude at this time, by obſerving, that public meaſures are always embraced under pretence of principle; and therefore, an uniform uncorrupted public character is one of the beſt evidences of real principle. The freethinking gentry tell us, upon this ſubject, that "every man has his price." It lies out of my way to attempt refuting them at preſent, but it is to be hoped there are many whoſe price is far above their reach. If ſome of my near relations, who took ſo much pains to attach me to the intereſt of evangelical truth, had been governed by court influence in their political conduct, it had not been in my power to have eſteemed their characters, or perhaps to have adhered to their inſtructions. But as things now ſtand, I have done

both from the beginning, and I hope God will enable me by his grace, to continue to do so to the end of life.

Sir,

Your's, &c.

EDUCATION

INTENDED TO FORTIFY THE MIND, AGAINST CRIMINAL EXCESS IN ALL ENJOYMENTS, EXHIBITED, IN THE VISION OF PLEASURE.

By Dr. COTTON.

He that has light within his own clear breaſt,
May ſit i' the centre, and enjoy bright day:
But he that hides a dark ſoul and foul thoughts,
Benighted walks under the mid-day ſun;
Himſelf is his own dungeon.

MILTON.

HEAR ye fair mothers of our iſle,
Nor ſcorn your poet's homely ſtile.
What tho' my thoughts be quaint or new
I'll warrant that my doctrine's true:
Or if my ſentiment be old,
Remember truth is ſterling gold.

You judge it of important weight
To keep your riſing offſpring ſtraight:
For this ſuch anxious moments feel,
And aſk the friendly aids of ſteel:
For this import the diſtant cane,
Or ſlay the monarch of the main.
And ſhall the ſoul be warp'd aſide
By paſſion, prejudice and pride?
Deformity of heart I call
The worſt deformity of all.
Your cares to body are confin'd,
Few fear obliquity of mind.
Why not adorn the better part!
This is a nobler theme for art.
For what is form, or what is face,
But the ſoul's index, or its caſe?
Now take a ſimile at hand,
Compare the mental ſoil to land.
Shall fields be till'd with annual care,
And minds lie fallow ev'ry year?
O ſince the crop depends on you,
Give them the culture which is due:
Hoe ev'ry weed and dreſs the ſoil,
So harveſt ſhall repay your toil.
If human minds reſemble trees,
(As ev'ry moraliſt agrees,)

Prune all the ſtragglers of your vine,
Then ſhall the purple cluſters ſhine.
The gard'ner knows, that fruitful life
Demands his ſalutary knife:
For ev'ry wild luxuriant ſhoot
Or robs the bloom, or ſtarves the fruit.
A Satyriſt in Roman times,
When Rome like Britain groan'd with crimes,
Aſſerts it for a ſacred truth,
That pleaſures are the bane of youth:
That ſorrows ſuch purſuits attend,
Or ſuch purſuits in ſorrows end:
That all the wild advent'rer gains
Are perils, penitence and pains.
Approve, ye fair, the Roman page,
And bid your ſons revere the ſage;
In ſtudy ſpend their midnight oil,
And ſtring their nerves by manly toil.
Thus ſhall they grow like Temple wiſe,
Thus future Lockes and Newtons riſe;
Or hardy chiefs to wield the lance,
And ſave us from the chains of France.
Yes, bid your ſons betimes forego
Thoſe treach'rous paths where Pleaſures grow!

Where the young mind is folly's ſlave,
Where ev'ry virtue finds a grave.
Let each bright character be nam'd,
For wiſdom or for valor fam'd:
Are the dear youths to ſcience prone
Tell how th' immortal Bacon ſhone!
Who leaving meaner joys to kings,
Soar'd high on contemplation's wings;
Rang'd the fair fields of nature o'er,
Where never mortal trod before;
Bacon! whoſe vaſt capacious plan
Beſpoke him angel more than man!
Does love of martial fame inſpire?
Cheriſh ye fair, the gen'rous fire;
Teach them to ſpurn inglorious reſt
And rouſe the hero in their breaſt:
Paint Creſſy's vanquiſh'd field anew
Their ſouls ſhall kindle at the view;
Reſolv'd to conquer or to fall,
When Liberty and Britain call.
Thus ſhall they rule the crimſon plain,
Or hurl their thunders thro' the main;
Gain with their blood, nor grudge the coſt,
What their degen'rate ſires have loſt:
The Laurel thus ſhall grace their brow,
As Churchill's once, or Warren's now.

One ſummer's evening as I ſtray'd
Along the ſilent moon-light glade;
With theſe reflections in my breaſt,
Beneath an oak I ſunk to reſt;
A gentle ſlumber intervenes,
And fancy dreſs'd inſtructive ſcenes.
Methought a ſpacious road I ſpied,
And ſtately trees adorn'd its ſide;
Frequented by a giddy croud
Of thoughtleſs mortals, vain and loud;
Who trip'd with jocund heel along,
And bade me join their ſmiling throng.
I ſtraight obey'd — perſuaſion hung
Like honey on the ſpeaker's tongue.
A cloudleſs ſun improv'd the day,
And pinks and roſes ſtrew'd our way.
Now as our journey we purſue,
A beauteous fabric roſe to view:
A ſtately dome! and ſweetly grac'd
With ev'ry ornament of taſte.
This ſtructure was a female's claim,
And Pleaſure was the Monarch's name.
The hall we enter'd uncontrol'd
And ſaw the queen enthron'd on gold;
Arabian ſweets perfum'd the ground,
And laughing Cupids flutter'd round;

A flowing veſt adorn'd the fair,
And flow'ry chaplets wreath'd her hair:
The Graces deck'd her with their ſmiles,
And Fraud beſtow'd her artful wiles;
Love taught her liſping tongue to ſpeak,
And form'd the dimple in her cheek;
The Lilly blended with the Roſe,
The Tincture of her face compoſe;
Nor did the god of Wit diſdain
To mingle with the ſhining train.
Her vot'ries flock'd from various parts,
And chiefly youth reſign'd their hearts:
The old in ſparing numbers preſs'd,
But aukward devotees at beſt.
Now let us range at large we cry'd,
Thro' all the garden's boaſted pride.
Here jaſmines ſpread the ſilver flow'r,
To deck the wall, or weave the bow'r.
The woodbines mix in am'rous play,
And breathe their fragrant lives away.
Here riſing myrtles form a ſhade,
There roſes bluſh, and ſcent the glade.
The orange with a vernal face,
Wears ev'ry rich autumnal grace;
While the young bloſſoms here unfold,
There ſhines the fruit, like pendent gold.

Citrons their balmy ſweets exhale,
And triumph in the diſtant gale.
Now fountains murm'ring to the ſong,
Roll their tranſlucent ſtreams along.
Thro' all the aromatic groves,
The faithful turtles coo their loves,
The Lark aſcending pours his notes,
And Linnets ſwell their rapt'rous throats.
We now were order'd to depart,
Reluctance ſat on ev'ry heart:
A porter ſhew'd a diff'rent door,
Not the fair portal known before!
The gates methought, were open'd wide,
The crouds deſcended in a tide.
But O! ye Heav'ns, what vaſt ſurpriſe
Struck the advent'rers' frighted eyes!
A barren heath before us lay,
And gath'ring clouds obſcur'd the day:
The darkneſs roſe in ſmoky ſpires;
The lightnings flaſh'd their livid fires:
Loud Peals of thunder rent the air,
While vengeance chill'd our hearts with fear.
Five ruthleſs tyrants ſway'd the plain,
And triumph'd o'er the mangled ſlain.
Here ſat Diſtaſte, with ſickly mein,

And more than half devour'd with ſpleen.
There ſtood Remorſe, with thought
oppreſt,
And vipers feeding on his breaſt:
Then Want, dejected, pale and thin,
With bones juſt ſtarting thro' his ſkin;
A ghaſtly fiend!—and cloſe behind
Diſeaſe his aching head reclin'd!
His everlaſting thirſt confeſs'd
The fires which rag'd within his breaſt.
Death clos'd the train! the hideous form
Smil'd unrelenting in the ſtorm:
When ſtrait a doleful ſhriek was heard;
I woke—The viſion diſappear'd.
Let not the unexperienc'd boy
Deny, that Pleaſures will deſtroy:
Or ſay, that dreams are vain and wild,
Like fairy tales, to pleaſe a child.
Important hints the wiſe may reap
From ſallies of the ſoul in ſleep.
And ſince there's meaning in my dream,
The moral merits your eſteem.

FINIS.

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